

- Report No. 90
- May-June 1990

Women's Concerns

Report




Women of South Africa

The faces of South Africa's women: so varied, so beautiful, wide with both suffering and smiles. I love the women of South Africa; I am proud of them, and I ache for them, and I am grateful that they have spoken so openly, in order that we might tell their stories to women in North America.

These stories and poems have been chosen to try to represent the variety of women's lives in South Africa. Some of the women are politically active in organizations working to end apartheid; others are struggling for food and clothing and schooling for themselves and their families, refusing to accept their oppression. Women of faith as diverse as an Anglican sister in Lesotho, a youth worker in Cape Town, the wife of an evangelist in Natal, and a member of the South African Council of Churches Executive Committee in Johannesburg, all share their lives with us. And women whose names we do not know speak through some of the poems and freedom songs and accounts of women's protests against apartheid laws in the

1950's. Women who have survived prison have also been brave enough to speak. There is no story here to represent the angry women who wear Nazi emblems in their fight to maintain apartheid laws, but there is the story of one privileged woman who has opened her life and her hands to rural women, sharing her skills, refusing to close her eyes to the suffering women endure.

Events are moving swiftly in South Africa these early months of 1990. We rejoice, but vow to work through until full liberation is achieved. Because it must be said: yes, the people's organizations have been unbanned, and Nelson Mandela is free, praise God, free to move among the people and to demand freedom from apartheid.

But the children in Natal are still homeless; women are still imprisoned; bulldozers still destroy the shacks built by women who have nowhere else to shelter their children; South Africa's laws still deny black people the right to live or educate their children anywhere other than in "black areas." Health care institutions and schools are woefully inadequate. There is not one government clinic which offers pap smear tests to the women of Soweto, a township of two million people; yet the test is offered routinely in clinics used by white women. Black children often attend classes of 70 or more pupils, even in grade one, while white schools close for lack of children, or remain open with most classrooms empty.

Such basic injustices fuel the anger and determination of South Africa's women, and through their stories they call on us to stand with them as they continue to struggle for justice, for equal opportunity, and for freedom. Those abstract words have concrete meaning for these South African women. Both those who write, and those whose stories they tell are my sisters and friends, and they have blessed me. May they bless you, too.

—Gann Hartley Herman

Gann Hartley Herman has worked with MCC in southern Africa for seven years, first as a lecturer at the University of Swaziland, and since 1986 as a member of the staff of Transformation Resource Centre in Maseru, Lesotho. Her duties include managing the library of Transformation, liaising with other resource centres and ecumenical organisations in the region, and copy-editing Transformation's publication, Work for Justice. She is married to Dale Herman, and they have two children, Charity and Thulani. She belongs to Church of Reconciliation (Presbyterian) in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Denise observes that there are many good lawyers in the Western Cape, but the lawyers committed to the struggle are overworked and they need other lawyers to join them. Also, the new society she is working for will need fundamental changes in its legal system, to eradicate apartheid and its effects. Denise wants to be part of those changes.

Many young people in South Africa who grow up in the church, as Denise did, leave their churches because they seem so dead, or backward, or slow to change. It is more exciting to be part of a community youth congress which is acting against injustice, and not just bemoaning it. Denise also has struggled with this, but has made a decision to give her energies and skills to church youth clubs. "They need me more." She told me about the South African Council of Churches (SACC) Youth Division, which sponsors a national organization called Inter-Church Youth (ICY), to foster ecumenical cooperation among young people.

During the past two years, Denise has given a great deal of her time to ICY's Western Cape branch, because through ICY's activities she can combine her political and spiritual struggle. She understands the church to be a site of struggle, but feels it has been neglected by the youth and therefore has been unable to respond when the people have asked their churches for political support. Denise says she encourages young people to stay in their churches and transform them. She especially loves the ecumenical nature of ICY, and serves on both its national executive committee and the Cape regional committee.

Since May 1988, Denise has worked at the Western Province Council of Churches, a regional council of the SACC, as a part-time documentalist in the resource centre, while volunteering with ICY and continuing her university studies. She also lives at a commune. She is a woman of high energy and deep commitment.

I asked Denise what it means to her to be a woman in the struggle for justice in South Africa. She observed that she has had to work hard to be treated as an adult by her older brothers, who had very traditional expectations of her in terms of domestic roles in their home. She says she is glad she had brothers, because she is now aware of how men often manipulate women. She is not sure that she wants to be married; she fears being blocked by marriage, having to be settled.

Denise asked me a very good question which I am still thinking about, and asking of others. She observed that

by Gann Hartley Herman

Denise Weeder: Acting for Justice

Who are the young women in South Africa who are involved in the struggle for a democratic, non-racial society? Here is the story of one woman, a bright, conscientious university student. Knowing her gives me great hope for South Africa's future.

Denise Weeder was born in 1967 in District Six in Cape Town. Her father died when she was six, and she remembers her childhood as one in which her family moved often, searching for a better house to live in. She has three older brothers, one of whom is mentally handicapped, and her mother's struggle to find a school for this brother is part of Denise's deep experience of racism; there are not adequate facilities for anyone other than the white communities. Her mother knits sweaters to earn an income, and she is also the secretary of the Anglican (Episcopal) St. Nicolas Parish. Her oldest brother is an Anglican priest.

Denise's family was able to send her to a private Catholic girls' school, and to give her music lessons, so she feels quite privileged. From the age of 13, she has held leadership positions at church and at school. During her senior year in 1985, a year of turmoil in the Cape Town schools, she was a member of her school's Student Representative Council. She also became involved in the Cape Youth Congress, as well as in her church youth group. I asked Denise how she did all that, and she admitted that she had to drop out of her first year at university because of all her community involvements. But she is not at all ashamed of that choice; it was necessary because the organizations she is part of needed her leadership. Now she intends to focus on her studies in law.

many organizations in South Africa, including church groups and the SACC, have a women's division. She wonders why. Denise believes that women must work to conscientize other women, but should it be done through women's groups? Too often when that happens, Denise says, the women then move ahead of their men, which creates conflicts between them. Isn't it better for women to carry their men along with them in the growing understandings of the causes of their oppression and how they can achieve justice? Shouldn't women and men work together in community and church organizations?



Under apartheid, so many pitfalls await young women like Denise. The gifts God has given her for leadership, critical thought and compassion for others threaten apartheid's basic assumptions about the "appropriate" role for women such as Denise. Black South African women know the triple oppression of discrimination based on poverty, on race, on gender, and they know it within their churches as well as without. But Denise, and other young women like her, are giving their lives to the task of calling the church of God to do justice for them. May God safeguard Denise.

by Kaye Cook

Christian Women in Apartheid: Giving Love, Teaching Hope, and Working for Change

The women of Pietermaritzburg carry a double burden, for being black and for being female. As mothers, wives, and sisters, they cannot escape from the pain of apartheid. Their daily struggles may be less likely to be featured in news stories than the stories of their men but they may be more painful, because these women are powerless against events they did not choose and cannot escape. These are the real stories of apartheid.

I arrived from the United States in 1988 in Pietermaritzburg, my first stop in southern Africa. Although I had heard a great deal about South Africa, and it can truly be a beautiful country, I was unprepared for its contrasts. As I flew into the city, I could see the mountains north of Pretoria and the wonderful resort areas of Durban. I drove around the city, admiring the elegant houses, and the expansive views toward Durban. Then I was taken to the black townships and resettlement areas. The contrast was appalling! I was in another world, crowded, each house looking like another, views that stopped at the neighbor's yard.

Pietermaritzburg is a major center of the conflict between the Inkatha forces of Chief Gatsha Buthelezi and the United Democratic Front. Whatever the reasons for the conflict, black women and children who live in this area, many of them who would have little political involvement if they could, suffer.

I traveled to Martizburg to meet some of these brave women who are Christians. With the help of Africa Enterprise, I met with several Christian women, each of whom exemplifies the pain of surviving in a land where it is so difficult to take care of and protect those whom one

loves and each of whom struggles to live her Christianity in a country where she is oppressed by those who claim to be Christian.

Ainah is a 42-year-old grandmother from the Zulu tribe whose daughter, two granddaughters, and grandson live with her. Her husband is a minister who lives in Durban and comes home monthly by bus to visit. She would like to live with him but cannot afford to move and does not want to leave her daughter homeless. Her daughter, a teacher, is married but her husband cannot live with her as there is not room in Ainah's house and it is impossible to get government approval for a house for their family.

Ainah herself has little education "because there were eleven at home. And my father was working as a domestic worker here at town and we were out, it was about 59 miles away from her, from town... So I went to college for master at eight (form one) and then, after master at eight, there was no money to go further."

She worked as a domestic worker for about five years. "I was...cleaning the house, cooking, looking after her mother, (and they were) ill-treating me a lot. It's a pity. I don't know what I did. They let me go."

Ainah is now a field worker for Africa Enterprise, working with their "Bonginkosi" program, which in Zulu means "Praise the Lord." She describes how the program started. "So (one) teacher noticed that her children were so hungry in school because they are sleeping, they are not even listening and then she started to see the need. And then she shouted and she wrote it in the paper, advertised the thing, and the white ladies, one white lady read the article, and she went straight to the school and discussed the matter with that lady. And they discussed, and she went back to the young women's group at her church and she told the story. We've got so many children in such and such a school which are hungry. What can we do about it? And there were many just said, 'Well, let's get soup, bread, and we'll supply them,' so the feeding scheme was started just like that. And it spread and they started to find out now from other schools how many kids, does the principal see any hungry children around? And the thing started to spread."

Many of their mothers are domestic workers, as Ainah was, and, "at about half past four, they have to get up. And then, there live the children. They haven't got time to see whether the child is sick or how is he going to get dressed to go to school. And she just go to work in town and then come back at six o'clock. So you can imagine if you are a

mother, you may spend all day taking care of a white child worrying all the while about your own."

"We just talk to the principal if he or she sees the need of enriching the feeding of the children...So, at the moment we have about 26 schools.

My conversation with Ainah then turned to her crowded household and the financial difficulties in the family of this one woman on whom so many depend. "At the moment, (my daughter) is on maternity leave and she won't get any money during these three months because she is only two years in the field...It is hard, it is very hard."

She understands the country's struggles as a mother, not as a political activist. "When you go to the cemetery on a Saturday, all those who are there are going to be buried are 16-year-olds, 17, 15, 18...and it is a very sad thing. Whenever I have to attend a funeral, I always looked, kept my eyes open to see what age and you find that those are the youngsters. And you think if you are a mature somebody, you say, 'What is the future of the nation if the young people are being killed like these?'...It's better not to have a son because you know that if you've got a son, you've got a grave in your house...Sometimes they come looking for him or shoot him in front of his parents...They do. And even one of mine who is misbehaving. They will come and discipline him in front of me."

As a Christian, Ainah struggles with what else she can do to help. "You can give them the word of God, pray with them. But you must give them something that they can have which can help them. And I said to myself, it is better for me, (to learn how to sew better and help them) with sewing. I'm very poor. And I'm a very poor sewer. But next week I ask to take sewing classes. At the moment, (I couldn't get money) so I said, 'I'll even take out of my pocket' so I have enrolled for that. It's costing 150 rand (approximately \$75 at the time) for six weeks so I've already paid \$75 for the deposit, so it's just that next week....Because my aim is not to do it for my benefit, just to help those women who can do something out of that machine, just sitting there. Yeah, I can teach them how to (sew and) crochet. It's a lot of time but, it is in God's work, I'm needed."

Feeling sad at the struggle this woman must go through, yet awed by her determination and caring, I then travelled to the next township, where I met Ella, a 28-year-old mother of two young children. Her husband lives in Durban, where he is an evangelist, but sometimes visits home.



Ella is a teacher but has to take maternity leave, three months without pay. "It was but through His mercy we made it for sure."

Teaching is difficult, with minimal resources. "We were told that as teachers, we mustn't talk about politics and they ask us what is taught...In one class, I've got so many students, seventy students...If I take you to my school, you can't think it's a school. You think it's a grazing land...No gate. The windows are broken. The panes are broken, some of them have been shot away. You wouldn't think it's a school...Then it's hard for us to help others to change...In my class, there are five children who are insane...I think it is because they have worried themselves sick and they are mentally affected...They are so scared they will be shot, we can't teach them."

She is now back to work. "I have to leave my young one at 7 a.m. and then see her at about 7 p.m. And I'm breast feeding. I do all this because if I don't study further, in South Africa, they need people who are educated...so it's better to improve ourselves so that when they say, 'we want people with better qualifications,' I'll be the one..."

Overcrowding is a major problem. "People here are packed like sardines...And then they have learned a lot of nonsense. Hitting, doing bad, stealing and so on...So, if the family grows bigger and bigger, they have no place to build their houses. So a family about eight people sleep in one room...So there are people who are doing things and they want to be jailed because they are fed in jail. Outside they have no accommodations...So they want to steal and go to jail."

Although she is in a less crowded house than some, she dreams of owning her house, instead of renting. "We don't have our own places and then all places...have been sold to the developers. Yes, we can't build our own houses now. We have to buy them from the developers."

I am frustrated that I could not do more to relieve their struggle. And yet Ella said it for me well when she said, "Sometimes when I feel, when I'm crying, one day I was crying because the police shoot a four-year-old boy...He was just standing there watching the cops, watching people run away, and then I looked at the coffin and I cried. Oh South Africa, it seems as if the whole of South Africa is weeping, crying, because there is blood, bloodshed, and it's terrible. It's so nice to see you coming to us, coming to weep with us-- coming to console us and say to us, 'There is a hope for South Africa.'"

There is hope for South Africa, in these and other women who love so deeply in the face of such adversity, and in their God who calls us to love one another and bear one another's burdens. The promises of the kingdom of God provide a striking contrast with the realities of apartheid, and these women know it. God's power helps transform their lives and the lives of those around them. They challenge us too to pray and work and give that the promises of God's kingdom might be realized before too much longer. Each one of use can do only so much; together, with God's help, we may yet persevere, and transform this imperfect world for God's glory.

Professor Kaye V. Cook teaches psychology at Gordon College in Massachusetts. In 1988 she travelled in Kenya, South Africa and Lesotho, listening to women's stories, as part of her work of developing curriculum for Gordon College. She is an active member of Evangelical Women's Caucus.

by Gann Hartley Herman

The Work of Prayer

The newspapers carry photographs of Christians marching in protest against injustice in South Africa. And they are always men. But women are not silent in the face of oppression, nor are they on the sidelines. It is just that men do not make room for them on the front row. Here is the story of one woman whose work is prayer.

August 7-11, 1989 in Cape Town, South Africa, a woman named Sister Camilla Mary was praying. I want you to know her story, and the story of her community, because their work of prayer is central to the vibrant hope which characterizes the struggle for justice in South Africa.

Sister Camilla is an Anglican nun, a member of a non-racial, multi-cultural contemplative community called the Society of the Precious Blood. Before she entered the community, she was part of an ecumenical youth work in South Africa, and lived with frequent police harassment, interrogation, and psychological intimidation. She was detained for brief periods several times. Her co-worker died in police custody.

Now she lives with her community in a quiet village in Lesotho, and they also have a house in Kimberley, in the Cape Province of South Africa. Their guest accommodations are almost never empty, and the serene setting belies the intensity of their work, which is to pray without ceasing for justice and peace in southern Africa.

Sister Camilla was born in the Cape Province, and in July, 1989 she went from Lesotho to her aunt's home in Cape Town for a holiday. But it seems that those whose work is prayer do not rest. Dean Colin Jones, the Dean of the Cathedral of St. George in Cape Town, asked Sister Camilla to come to the Cathedral during the week of August 7 to 11 to pray for the activities for the Month of Compassion, which were focused on meeting the needs of homeless children. So every day of that week, Camilla was there, a praying presence to support her sisters and brothers. Others came to join her for brief periods, and she says the Cathedral was alive with the prayers of Christians of all races, all classes. The South African police were also always there, just outside the Cathedral, a preying and prying presence.

On August 8, her second day at the Cathedral, there was a peaceful meeting to protest police harassment against peaceful demonstrations in the townships. Camilla stood with them on the steps of the church, and then returned to her prayer.

Archbishop Tutu, a man of prayer, asked Camilla's community to give her to Cape Town for yet another week, so that she might keep a prayer vigil at the chapel at Bishopscourt, the Archbishop's residence and offices. There she remained for the week of August 14-18, a praying presence. People on the Archbishop's staff joined her in the chapel daily, and Tutu spent almost an hour praying with her one morning.

On the August 8, her second day at the Cathedral, there



was a peaceful meeting to protest police harassment against peaceful demonstrations in the townships. Camilla stood with them on the steps of the church, and then returned to her prayer.

Archbishop Tutu, a man of prayer, asked Camilla's community to give her to Cape Town for yet another week, so that she might keep a prayer vigil at this chapel at Bishopscourt, the Archbishop's residence and offices. There she remained for the week of August 14-18, a praying presence. People on the Archbishop's staff joined her in the chapel daily, and Tutu spent almost an hour praying with her one morning.

On August 17, a large protest march began with a prayer service at St. George's Cathedral, and Camilla returned there. The story of Daniel's three friends was retold and celebrated. The people knew that they might face dogs, teargas, batons, but they determined to march peacefully, using no violence against the police. Then the crowd divided into those who would march, those who would serve as marshalls and monitors, and those who would stay and pray.

Several people stayed with Camilla in the Cathedral to pray, but then one by one they were lured outside. Camilla felt very strongly the temptation to also go out and be "part of the action," but her task was clear, and she remained. Many of the young people, who did not know her, gave her their personal things to keep for them there in the cathedral, "in case I am detained." Camilla was very touched by their trust, and by their complete acceptance of the validity and importance of her work of prayer.

The marchers proceeded toward the Parliament Buildings, three abreast, and then were stopped by 30 to 40 policewomen. Messages were relayed back to Camilla praying in the Cathedral, and then came the most frightening one: the police have arrested Chris, Archbishop Tutu's personal chaplain. Camilla prayed, while the marchers knelt, ignoring the police taunts and orders to disperse. Then Chris was released, and singing, the marchers retraced their steps to the Cathedral.

Camilla says it filled her with so much joy and hope to see the people, united across all colors and walks of life by their determination to end apartheid and bring justice to the lives of all South Africans. But it gives many Christians in Southern Africa hope to see women like Camilla and the community of the Society of the Precious Blood, who have accepted the very difficult task God has given them of defeating the powers of evil through the work of prayer.

A conference on domestic violence and sexual abuse is scheduled for November 2 and 3, 1990, in Upland, Calif. Upland Brethren in Christ Church will host the event.

"Shedding light on darkness: A Mennonite and Brethren in Christ response to violence and sexual abuse in the family," is being planned by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Domestic Violence Task Force, MCC's Committee on Women's Concerns and West Coast MCC.

Ruth Krall, associate professor of religion and psychology and director of peace studies at Goshen (Ind.) College, will be resource speaker. "I'll attempt to help participants, pastors and lay people, address the difficult issues the church is facing internally," says Krall, who did a doctoral dissertation on women's healing after rape.

For more information or to register in the United States, contact MCC West Coast, 1010 G Street, Reedley, CA 93654; phone (209) 638-6911. In Canada contact MCC Canada Domestic Violence Task Force, PO Box 1292, Winkler, MB R6W 4B3; phone (204) 325-7514.

Here I am
woman of South Africa
Now you see me with
my back bent
sickle in hand
cutting wheat
on a white farmer's field.

Then you see me
on my knees
scrubbing the dirty floors
of another woman.



You see me in parks
holding little white hands
whilst in dusty townships
my own children
wait alone...

You see me again
at a machine
sewing garments
I'll never wear.

Or on a Sunday
you may see me
in a church...
sometimes alone, sometimes
with my family.

I am also
in a detention cell
held hostage
by a state of emergency
imposed on me
by men I'll never meet.

Look at me!
I am the nourishment of the nation
my ample breasts provide
knowledge, power and
the quest for liberation
of my nation

Here I am
A woman of South Africa
ready to face a new dawn
here I am, here I am.

An untitled poem printed in the Catholic newspaper, *The New Nation*, March 22-30, 1989.



by Jenni Karlsson

Nozizwe Madlala

“Women’s experiences in South Africa are different from women in other parts of the world, but we also have some common ground. We can strengthen one another.” This statement comes from Nozizwe Madlala, the chairperson of the Natal Organization of Women (NOW) who lives in Durban, South Africa. Nozizwe, in her mid-thirties, leads a very active life, busy with career, family, politics, and the mobilization of women.

Nozizwe Madlala grew up in the rural area of Umzumbe, 20 kilometres from the nearest town, with her mother, sister and cousins.

It was while she was boarding at the Inanda Seminary, a girls’ school outside the city of Durban, that some of the seeds of personal development during those formative years, were planted. At the school, Nozizwe participated in many debates about racism in South Africa. During her final year, she met Steve Biko, the father of South African black consciousness, when he visited the school and introduced her to the South African Students Organization (SASO). “It was through the teachings of SASO that I learned that there was nothing wrong with being black,” she says.

The following year Nozizwe enrolled at the University of Fort Hare to study science. There she became an active member of SASO until she had to leave because of unrest. Shortly thereafter she became employed as an assistant researcher for “Black Review,” published by the Black Community Programme (BCP), an organization founded by Steve Biko, and later banned by the South Africa regime.

“It was a significant time for me in that I was beginning to understand the things which, as a child, I had known were unfair, but which I couldn’t explain. For example, being brought up in a rural area which was poverty stricken, and going to school with bare feet,” explained Nozizwe. During this period Nozizwe often witnessed political discussion among the leadership of the BCP.

Nozizwe gave birth to a son in 1981, whom she named Mandela, after the imprisoned leader of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC), Nelson Mandela. People were often surprised at this, which led to discussion about her son being named after a prisoner.

After moving to Durban, one August 9th, Women’s Day, Nozizwe attended a photographic exhibition commemorating the 1952 women’s pass defiance acts, the 1956 march on Pretoria and the 1959 Natal uprisings and potato boycott. “The exhibition was an eye-opener.” Nozizwe explains: “I knew vaguely about the march, and about the history of the struggle in our country, but not about the role of women in the struggle.”

Through these experiences Nozizwe became involved in the Durban Women’s Group which organized the annual celebration of National Women’s Day. At the 25th celebration of National Women’s Day, Nozizwe met Gladys Manzi, one of the leaders in the women’s march, but who was restricted by banning orders. Later Nozizwe met many other stalwarts of the women’s resistance. They realized the potential for a formal structure for women, and in 1983, the Natal Organization of Women (NOW) was born.

The young structure was strengthened by the political activity in the surrounding townships of Durban, focusing on rent, transport and education issues. In 1984 Nozizwe was elected chairperson of NOW with a grassroots membership of 500-plus township women, a position she still holds. This leadership position hastened Nozizwe’s political involvement to represent NOW on the regional executive of the United Democratic Front (UDF), and to attend several important international women’s conferences.

Being an activist was also a sacrifice to Nozizwe’s personal life. In 1985 she was detained for 35 days in solitary confinement because of her role in NOW and the UDF. Again in 1987 she was detained for 12 months in solitary confinement for providing accommodation to an ANC activist. Her son had to be cared for by her mother and

aunt, and her right to study was denied. However, on both occasions Nozizwe emerged from the prison cells with strengthened commitment to the liberation struggle. "I was very angry, because it is not necessary to subject people to this kind of experience. I did not hate, but I was very angry," she says.

A recent highlight in Nozizwe's life has been her marriage to Jeremy Routledge, a non-violent Quaker. This marriage between an African woman and a white man is still most unusual in South Africa, frequently causing comments and stares in public. Although it is now lawful to have a mixed marriage, the absurdity of the apartheid laws make it illegal for Nozizwe and Jeremy to live together!

Cultural integration was positively achieved in their marriage ceremony, when they merged African, Quaker and Christian traditions.

"Quakers stress that there is a little of God in every person. This has brought about a major change in my relationships with people. I find it easier to diffuse difficult situations now, and still stand up for myself," explained Nozizwe. The Quaker stand on non-sexism and non-racialism has been an encouragement to her. "I have been strengthened spiritually by the realistic and supportive way in which the Quakers worship," added Nozizwe.

"I value life," says Nozizwe, who supports the armed struggle as a strategy to arrive at a political settlement. She does not see this stand as a contradiction. "I am opposed to people being killed, but feel okay about state institutions as targets." Nozizwe's viewpoint is accepted by Jeremy, who as a peacemaker prefers not to condemn people, particularly in a situation where they say they have no other choice.

The ANC women's department and the Anti-Apartheid Movement in the Netherlands called a conference for South African women in January 1990. Nozizwe represented NOW on the planning committee. Besides chairing a few of the sessions, she also presented the paper which NOW wrote collectively on the nature of women's oppression.

In the future Nozizwe hopes to contribute to the upliftment of women in particular, for a South Africa in which everyone can share in the fruits of a plentiful land. To this end she has begun studying social science at the University of Natal.

Another commitment to faith in a peaceful future for South Africa was the birth of Sibusiso Simon, Nozizwe and

Jeremy's son, a year ago. Mandela is enjoying belonging to a family and learning to share his mother with Jeremy and Sibusiso.

Toward the end of 1989, mass protest marches swept through the streets of South Africa's major cities. In Durban 20,000 people participated in a freedom march through the town, carrying banners proclaiming the demand for a free, non-racial and democratic South Africa. The march culminated at the steps of the city hall.

At the request of the organizers, Nozizwe chaired the final speeches, oral poetry and singing. Finally, the ANC flag was hoisted to fly proudly for the first time in the center of Durban, a city with the fastest growing population in South Africa, the majority of whom live in shacks. Nozizwe called for discipline as people took their routes home past hundreds of policemen, and then she led the people in singing the national anthem. "Nkosi sikelel' Afrika... (God bless Africa...)." It was a fine tribute to the growing involvement of women in the struggle for a free, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

Jenni Karlsson is a single parent with a 16-year-old son and 11-year-old daughter. She originally qualified as a teacher but presently is the main librarian of the Ecumenical Centre's Resource Centre in Durban. She is a white South African whose paternal family came from Britain as settlers in 1820. Jenni is a member of NOW, as well as the national co-secretary of the Congress of South African Writers. She does freelance journalism and has published poetry. She is active in the non-racial Evangelical Lutheran Church in southern Africa.

Action Ideas

What You Can Do:

1. Carry a Shell Discredit card as a reminder that you are boycotting Shell Oil. Royal Dutch/Shell, through its subsidiary, Shell South Africa, provides the South African Police and Military with fuel vital to their efforts to enforce apartheid.

The boycott, which was started in South Africa, is supported by church leaders who tell us "cutting the pipeline of foreign oil to Pretoria will serve as an effective pressure on the white minority to agree to peaceful change."

2. Declare your church a Shell Free Zone and write a press release for the event. This supports people in South Africa working for peaceful change and witnesses to your

congregations's concern for sisters and brothers there.

3. Support Sanction Legislation in Congress. Many people believe the sanctions and boycotts brought about Mandela's release, but apartheid is still alive, so we must continue with both. For up to date information in the U.S. phone the Anti-Apartheid Hotline (202) 546-0408. You will receive a two minute recorded message of information and

action suggestion.

4. Develop a Sister Community Project in your town. The South African government has moved 3 1/2 million black South Africans against their will in an attempt to push the country's 80 per cent black majority onto only 13 percent of the land. People resisting forced removal have asked for help from Americans. The Sister Community Project connects threatened communities with

Behind Bars

So many women have dedicated their lives to fighting alongside millions of South Africans, for peace, justice, and freedom from discrimination. For some, like Dulcie September and Victoria Mxenge, this dedication has cost them their lives. Others have been detained, tortured, interrogated, restricted and imprisoned. The suffering of women behind bars is often unknown and unlike the imprisonment of men, and receives little attention.

Women have the responsibility of children who have suffered greatly having been separated from their mothers. Noma-India Mfeketo has been detained three times since the first State of Emergency in 1985. Detained under Section 29, she was denied access to a lawyer, her family, reading and study material. She was very worried about her 8 year old son, Onele. "I didn't get any news. In fact, I didn't know anything that was happening at home for six months and that was quite hurting, because of my experience last time I was detained and my son died."

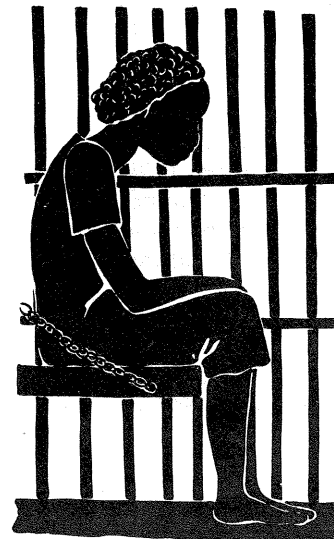
Nontembiso Ndabeni was sentenced to six years imprisonment with Gertrude Sofute. They are due for release in 1993. Nontembiso has two daughters aged 15 and 10 and a son aged 14 who live with her sister. Gertrude has a 16-year-old son who lives with her family. Regina Madumise, who will also be released in 1993 has a 22-year-old son who lives with his grandmother. Ruth Gerhardt, sentenced in 1983 to 10 years imprisonment along with her husband, has a teenage son who lives with family in Switzerland. Many women take their young children to prison with them and some have given birth while in detention or serving a sentence.

Audrey Skosana received a five-year sentence in June 1988. In September of the same year, she gave birth to a son who is with her in prison. Noma-India Mfeketo was detained in September last year with her two-and-a-half month old

baby. She says, "Most of the time I was confined to bed because it was cold; a cement floor, and the baby was very small, to put on the floor. When I was detained, I just gave birth by Caesarian and the operation was still sore so I was very sensitive to the cold." Buyiswa Jack, a field worker at the Western Province Council of Churches, was pregnant at the time of her detention and she gave birth to her daughter Aluta days after her release.

Women have spoken about the fear of being raped while in prison. The police have often threatened them and many have been sexually harassed and tortured on their private parts. An 18-year-old woman, severely tortured during her detention in the Southern Cape, speaks about her torment. After closing the doors, blinds, and windows, the policemen placed paper and cloth in her mouth, took off her jersey and her shirt and pulled her onto the desk. "One of them took off my bra. The forced me to bend over the open drawer so that one of my breasts would hang in the drawer. Then they slammed it shut so that my breast was squashed. They did this three times to each breast. They also pulled out handfuls of my hair."

This was not her only bad experience. One week later, she was sleeping in her cell when a black uniformed policeman entered and said he wanted to have sex with her. "I screamed and he tried to pull off my pants and lift my shirt. I pulled the buttons off his uniform jacket and screamed. He put his hand over my mouth but people in the cell next door had heard me and they started shouting at him." Sexual harassment and men violently abusing their power are not new to women. But, for those behind bars in the most cold and cruel conditions, the fear is even greater.



Americans willing to support them in their protests by writing letters, making phone calls and learning more about their problems. For more information write to U.S.—South Africa Sister Community Project, 2601 Mission Street, Suite 400, San Francisco, CA 94110, (415) 824-2938.

5. Invite South African college and university students to speak in your church. Listening to the affects of apartheid on

their lives will move you to action.

6. Pray. Pray for the church and it's leadership for continued courage and strength as they minister amidst the sin of apartheid. Pray for the women of South Africa who often raise families without partners because of the apartheid system. Prayer changes things—often ourselves!

Action ideas compiled/
submitted by Synapses, Inc.,
1821 W. Cullerton, Chicago, IL
60608.

These are only some of the many problems facing women in prison. Therese Ramashamola is presently on death row, and Marion Sparg is serving a 25-year sentence. Famana Twala was sentenced to life imprisonment and Nontobeko Madolo to 18 years. Many women are still awaiting trial. Above all, these women, like others who are jailed, are committed to a South Africa without apartheid. Some have joined the armed struggle, others are active in organizations. The only weapon the government has against these women, besides guns, is to imprison them.

Those who remain outside must never forget the women who have sacrificed time with their families and children to move one step closer to a just South Africa.

Reprinted from *Crisis News*, August 1989, the newsletter of Western Province Council of Churches in Cape Town (a regional office of SACC).

by Maggie Helass

An Interview with Sheena Duncan

Sheena Duncan's name is inevitably associated with the Black Sash, a cadre of women pitted against human rights abuses in South Africa.

The Black Sash phenomenon began in 1955, after the Nationalist government, the architects of apartheid, came to power. Sheena's mother, Jean Sinclair, was one of the predominantly middle-class white women working at the coal-face of human rights abuses in apartheid society.

Black Sash is considered to be a veteran in the South African struggle. Sheena was president of the Black Sash from 1975 to 1978, and again from 1982 until 1986.

Sheena retains a position as the National Coordinator of the Black Sash Advice Offices. But her role in the fight against apartheid has broadened since she became Vice President of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). She has toured Australia, visited France at the invitation of the French government, and addressed a forum of theologians and academics in Sweden during the past year.

What makes a woman give up the leisured life of a middle-class white South African, and spend herself tirelessly in the way against injustice?

To find out I visited Sheena at her home in a shabbily genteel suburb of Johannesburg, where she lives with her architect husband, Neil. Their two grownup daughters both live overseas.

We sat overlooking the Japanese garden which slopes steeply to a stream. Sheena's office is piled with books, magazines, documents. She constantly monitors radio and television news broadcasts, and reads two newspapers daily.

Q: How did it feel growing up in an apartheid society?

A: "I didn't think about it at all. In my childhood, the big issue was the war. It wasn't really until the end of the war that anything was discussed in the society in which I lived, other than the war."

"That was still 1945 before the National Party came to power, and I suppose I became aware of social issues as opposed to political ones in those years, because our headmistress was a very religious woman who was very friendly with both Father Trevor Huddleston and Alan Paton. They were invited to speak at the school, and we were taken to Sophiatown, to see Huddleston's church, and we were taken to the reformatory. So I suppose one became aware, but it was very much on a social issues level. One became aware that some people were very poor."

Q: When was it that you became aware of apartheid as a social justice issue?

A: "In 1949 when I completed high school I was still not focusing much outside my own affairs. Then in 1950 I went to Scotland and left it all behind. I can't really remember. It was a slow dawn. Even when I was in college I used to canvass for the Conservative Party, can you believe it?" She did a teacher training course at the Edinburgh College for Domestic Science.

"That was where I became aware of real poverty, because in those days people in Edinburgh lived in the most incredible slums--in tenements. You'd climb these stairs, and there might be a lavatory on every third floor in a corner. It really was a terrible way to live."

Sheena returned to South Africa and married Neil in 1955. They both grew up in Johannesburg, and she knew him as a server at the local church. Sheena met him again in London where he was doing post-graduate work.

After their marriage they went to Salisbury in what was then Southern Rhodesia, where Neil was to set up an office for his firm of architects.

Q: Do you remember when your concern with justice issues moved from poverty to race-consciousness?

A: "No, because they happen so slowly these kind of developments. I was baptised a Presbyterian. Then I became an Anglican because Neil is an Anglican, in Rhodesia. That's when I became very... well, I'd always been religious,... I lapsed sometimes."

Sheena is scrupulously truthful. "I started to think about things: like when you are commanded to feed the hungry, what does it mean? Because it's a bit fruitless going on day after day making soup to feed them, if you can cure the cause."

Q: How has your faith influenced your attitude to social justice?

A: "Entirely and totally. I don't think I could separate the two. Because it won't let me do what so many of my contemporaries have done, which is actually enjoy the marvellous life that white people in Johannesburg can enjoy. You know, with lots of Bridge, and tennis, and playing golf... and I just simply don't have any social life of that kind at all."

"If I hadn't had that religious belief then I wouldn't have been troubled with a conscience that said that I couldn't just watch the world go by me and do what I wanted with my own life."

Q: What major areas are you involved in at the moment?

A: "There are really two. One half is the church work that I do. I was on the Anglican board for Justice and Reconciliation for years."

"Whenever I get depressed about how we have to kick and shove the church to move--I look back at that time. I was elected a member of the Provincial Synod from this Diocese in 1973--and that was the first synod at which women had been allowed. It was massively white, with a handful of black members of the synod."

"When I look at synods nowadays, which properly reflect the makeup of South African society--many more black people than white people, and much more relaxed and open attitude."

"I was appointed as the Church of the Province of South Africa's (CPSA) representative to the South African Council of Churches Justice and Reconciliation Committee, which is where my involvement with the SACC arose.

The other side is the work I do with the Black Sash. I'm officially known as the National Co-ordinator of the Black Sash Advice Offices, which is a support/resource kind of role. I maintain a resource centre. I don't read them all, nobody reads them all, but you read the index and check out the departments of justice, law and order, manpower and constitutional development which cover most of the

Black Sash work. Then if it's necessary, if it's new legislation, I translate it into language that people can understand. If it needs campaigning against, then the Black Sash would start campaigning."

A lucid speaker with a powerful presence, Sheena is much in demand at public meetings. She frequently shares a platform with other religious and community leaders in many parts of the country. Last year she became the first woman to address the Anglican synod of bishops, where she spoke on non-violent direct action. She is recognized as a skilled strategist in the processes of peaceful protest pioneered by Ghandi and Martin Luther King.

Q: Have you ever been aware of any constraints on your life because you are a woman?

A: "No, I don't think I've had any constraints. Because my father never put any constraints on his daughters or expected them to behave in any way different from his three sons. Except in the obvious ways. He didn't educate the brothers at the cost of the sisters."

"Neil's attitude is incredible. When we came back from Rhodesia his senior partners said to him, 'I hope that Sheena's not going to get involved in politics when she comes back here.' And Neil said, 'What Sheena does is her business, not the firm's.' And that has always been his attitude."

Q: He's supported you a lot? How does he support you?

A: "Well, never by coming to Black Sash meetings and hearing me speak and that kind of thing. Although he would have if I'd asked, but my family knows I don't like having them in the audience. Politics is not his passion in any way at all....but really just giving me the space, I suppose you could call it, to do all the things that have been necessary through that work--like all these overseas trips and such, which have cost him financially--because people invite you over, pay your fares, but they never, or rarely think of pocket money, or your subsistence."

"Of course the phone bills are astronomical. A lot of the work happens at night when you phone people in other parts of the country. Also he's very good, really supportive of the Black Sash--using his talents. He'll always produce a calligraphy scroll, he'll always work at the morning market. If the Black Sash is having a party for somebody, he'll always help."

Q: What are your hopes for the future?

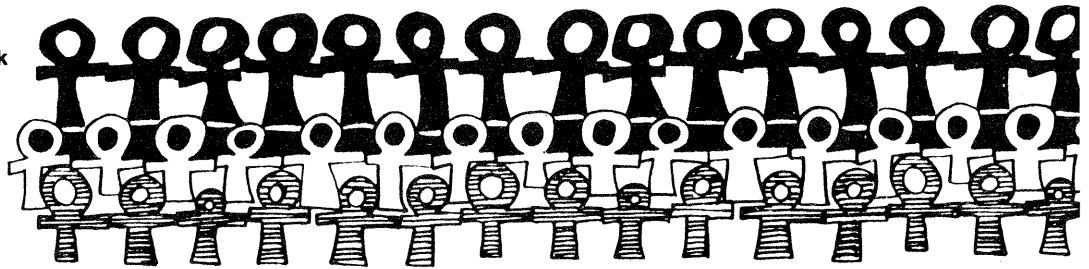
A: The answer comes without a moment's hesitation. "The kingdom of God here in South Africa of course! But realistically, what one hopes for in the future is the kind of just and democratic society that we could establish. What one fears for the future is that this government won't move fast enough to avert the kind of civil war that's going to be inevitable if we take more time. Because you're getting an increasingly violent response from young black people, and you've got this increasingly violent response from the white right. I think we need to work really hard if we are going to avert that sort of disaster."

"Personally, I want to retire graciously, do a lot of reading, perhaps writing--not yet though! Neil's due to retire in two years time. Again that's going to be another change in our lives, when I'll have to start thinking about more time at home. But I think he'll keep busy. I mean, I don't anticipate having to stop work or anything--for a while yet."

Maggie Helass left Great Britain at the end of the 1960's and has been in South Africa for 17 years. She works for the Church of the Province of southern Africa (Anglican) as Director of their Media Workshop (a unit of the Department of Mission), and her great passion is to tell the story of the church as it unfolds in South Africa, and to help others learn to tell the story. She is an active member of the Black Sash Resources.

"We will not settle for trite reforms that merely make our chains more comfortable. Apartheid must be abolished. Nothing else will do."

Rev. Allan Boesak



studied in the best private schools in the region. She talks of the days when, as a child, she loved to walk or ride horseback over the expanse of her family's farm. But she remembers the time when she returned from boarding school, set out for her usual walk, and was forbidden by her father to go alone; he sent an armed guard with her. Prue began to be aware of the electric fences around her family's land, and of the huge disparity between her lifestyle and the lives of the farm laborers who lived just over the hill. The Rhodesian War (as she knew it) loomed.

Prue left Rhodesia for university in Cape Town, South Africa, and there came to understand the system which offered people of her race a world of opportunity at the expense of others. She became sickened by that system, both in South Africa and in Rhodesia, and while her brother fought for white supremacy, Prue tried to opt out, not wanting to contribute to the exploitation any longer. So she moved into a small community of like-minded people, grew vegetables, made shoes, and lived simply. She became very skillful with her hands.

But eventually Prue left that community. She decided that it is not possible to opt out. She came to see herself as part of the problem and therefore felt she needed to take a more active stand against the injustices which she had begun to see more clearly. Prue then moved to a South African "homeland" and began to share her skills with the poor. She lived in a hut, communicated in the local language, and for the first time began to feel for herself what life is like for those "on the other side." Prue's family refused to visit her there, and could not understand why she would choose this life, when she could have everything in Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia).

In the eight years that I have known Prue, the specific nature of her work has changed. Her hut was demolished by a tornado, and she has had to move. But Prue's commitment to actively working toward a new South Africa remains strong. She is a skilled and intelligent craftswoman who could easily use her creativity for personal gain. But she is not interested. Her eyes light up as she describes the women's groups she works with and the literacy materials she is helping them to develop. Her finishing school fingers have been replaced by the hands of a workwoman, a woman who does not see her own future as separate from the oppressed in her land. Prue has been a constant challenge to me. Hers is a lifelong "MCC term." She has given up wealth, sophistication, financial standing and family relationships in order to live with herself and her nation. Her areas of struggle touch me deeply, for our starting places in life are not so dissimilar.

by Magdalene Andres

Blending the Light

It was our last evening together; tomorrow we would go to our different homes and places of work. It had been an intense time for each of us, Basotho, South Africans and North Americans looking to the Bible for its message to us as women. Now we came together in this circle for the last time, in order to symbolically bring into our midst the many women who would have liked to be with us, but could not be. As we named each woman, we lit a candle, so that the light of each woman could shine amongst us.

The naming moved me. One candle was lit for a woman in detention in a South African prison; another for a woman who had just lost a child in a violent encounter with police; another for the many women in Lesotho who struggle to support their families while their husbands dig for "precious" metals in South African mines. Candles were lit for several women who work for peace.

For awhile I was overwhelmed. I tremendously respect the women who were named. I can imagine their lives, their difficulties, their witness. But I can only listen and imagine. I do not know that life myself. I have never been detained, or had my house bulldozed to ruins, or lost a child. Most likely, I will never have to face those experiences myself.

As names were spoken and candles were lit, my thoughts kept coming back to Prue. Prue is a woman near my age. She was born into a wealthy white Rhodesian family and



As we sat in our circle that night. I lit a candle for Prue, and for others who strive to live with integrity in South Africa. The light of her candle blended with all the others, as we envisioned a South Africa where all could work and live together.

Magdalene Andres worked with MCC as a community worker in South Africa from 1982-1985, and is presently with MCC in Lesotho, southern Africa. She is a member of Rosthern Mennonite Church, Rosthern, Saskatchewan.



Resources

The materials listed here are among those I have found most helpful in my work in southern Africa. This bibliography is in no way exhaustive, but is intended to be a guide for those seeking either analysis of the role and status of women in this region, or additional stories of women in southern Africa.

—Gann Hartley Herman

- **AGENDA: A Journal About Women and Gender.** P.O. Box 37232, Overport, Durban 4067, Republic of South Africa.

Published by a women's collective, this journal explores issues of "the position of women within South African society. We believe that women in South Africa experience exploitation and oppression on the basis of their class, race and gender...and we need to struggle on all these fronts." Includes articles on women in the churches, in the workplace, etc., both in academic and personal history formats.

- Baard, Frances. *My Spirit is Not Banned.* As told to Barbie Schreiner. Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, P.O. Box BW-350, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1986.

The story of Frances Baard, a black South African trade unionist, political activist and women's leader for over 60 years, who has experienced police harassment, imprisonment, and banishment. But her indomitable spirit has in no way been repressed. I had hoped to include in this *Report* an excerpt in which Frances Baard describes her involvement in the formation of the Freedom Charter in 1955, but was unable to arrange permission.

- Bernstein, Hilda. *For Their Triumphs and For Their Tears: Conditions and Resistance of Women in Apartheid South Africa.* Revised edition. London: International Defense and Aid Fund, 1978.

Written by a woman who has herself experienced severe state repression, this small book describes women's lives under condition of migrant labour, in the homelands and the urban areas, and outlines women's leadership in the resistance against oppression in South Africa. Bernstein includes several brief biographies and historical photographs.

- Brown, Susan; Hofmeyr, Isabel; Rosenberg, Susan, editors. *LIP From Southern African Women.* Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983.

Poems, stories, drawings, essays, character sketches, and photographs by over sixty women of southern Africa, compiled by a women's collective. "What emerges is a search for an artistic language that does not derive its vocabulary from Western Europe and the United States, a language that fits with women's lives."

- Cock, Jacklyn. *Madis and Madams: A Study in the Politics of Exploitation.* Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1980.

Cock's sociological study of South African domestic servants and their madams has received wide attention; I drew it to the attention of *Report* readers in the issue on

domestic work. A video has also been done on this study, which includes exploration of the relationships between employers and employed, the self-imagery of domestic workers, and ways in which women in South Africa are educated for domesticity.

- Detainees' Parents Support Committee. *Cries of Freedom: Women in Detention in South Africa*. Originally published as "A Women's Place is in the Struggle, Not Behind Bars." London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1988.

Published only weeks before its parent organization was banned, this book highlights the detentions and political trials women endured during the height of state repression in South Africa in the late 1980's.

- International Defense and Aid Fund. *To Honour Women's Day: Profiles of Leading Women in the South African and Namibian Liberation Struggles*. London: International Defense and Aid Fund, 1981.

A photographic essay which illustrates the oppression of South African women: the migrant labour system, family life, resettlements, working women, squatter camps, women's campaigns against apartheid. The photographs were commissioned by the United Nations Centre Against Apartheid for the United Nations Decade for Women.

- Joseph, Helen. *Side by Side: The Autobiography of Helen Joseph*. London: Zed Books, 1986.

Helen Joseph is a revered veteran of the struggle for freedom in South Africa whose story parallels the liberation struggle since 1956. She was silenced by a banning order for many years, and her books have long been banned in South Africa. Her story is well worth reading, and all royalties she has donated to the South African Council of Churches.

- Kuzwayo, Ellen. *Call Me Woman*. Preface by Nadine Gordimer and foreword by Bessie Head. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985.

Kuzwayo's book gives a useful balance to Joseph's story, because Ellen Kuzwayo struggled up against so many odds to become a community leader in Soweto. Gordimer calls her "history in the person of one woman." Kuzwayo's views on the church and the Black Woman might be of special interest to *Report* readers.

- Kona Makhoere, Caesarina. *No Child's Play: In Prison Under Apartheid*. London: The Women's Press, 1988.

Not many South African women have been able to write of the horrors they have experienced in South Africa's jails, but this strong woman speaks for many. She was arrested in 1976 as a student, detained without trial for a long period, and then convicted of terrorism. She was jailed for six years, in solitary confinement for most of that time. A story of survival, and of her struggle to forgive her jailers.

- Lawson, Lesley. *Working Women*. Johannesburg: Sached Trust/Ravan Press, 1985.

A very accessible book which combines personal stories of black women workers in South Africa with analysis of working conditions under apartheid. Includes photographs of the women. Factory workers, domestic workers, farm workers, women in the unions, and women's "double shift" of work for wages and work at home are all portrayed. Highly recommended.

- Magaia, Lina. *Dumba Nengue: Run For Your Life. Peasant Tales of Tragedy in Mozambique*. Translated by M. Wolfers. Tranton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1988.

Lina's stories were first written for her own people, but were published in the U.S. so that the close relationship between South Africa's destabilization of her neighbours and the suffering Lina's people endure might be better known in the U.S. All the people of southern Africa experience apartheid, and Mozambicans have been particular targets through South Africa's support for Renamo (MNR) atrocities. Her stories are not easy to read or hear, but we must know them.

- Marks, Shula, editor. *Not Either an Experimental Doll: The Separate Worlds of Three South African Women. Correspondence of Lily Moya, Mabel Palmer and Sibisiswe Makhanya*. Durban: Killie Cambell Africana Library and Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1987.

Fascinating primary documents of South African women's involvements in education: a white patron, a black student and a black social worker. Analysis of their separate worlds, the divisions of race, age and class, make a useful contribution to social history in South Africa, and especially help to bring the hidden history of women in the light.

- Morgan, Robin, editor. *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology*. New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1984, pp. 600-620.

A compact description of South Africa's laws and practices affecting women, including data on population, the economy, labour and marriage. A useful overview.

- Ramphela, Mamphela and Boonzaier, Emile. "The Position of African Women: Race and Gender in South Africa," in *South African Keywords: The Uses and Abuses of Political Concepts*. Edited by E. Boonzaier and J. Sharp. Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, 1988, 153-66.

"The parameters within which the domination of men over women takes place...in South Africa...is often reinforced by the system of racial domination." An important essay for those wishing to understand the interplay of racism and sexism in this region.

- *SPEAK Magazine*. 20 St. Andrew's Street, Durban 4001, RSA.

Also published by a women's collective, this very popular magazine is written in easy-to-read English, and addresses all issues relating to women's health, families, work, and political lives. Poems, stories, news reports, and informative articles on women's health and women's rights form part of each issue. An excellent example of the ways in which South African women are empowering themselves.

- Vukani Makhosikazi Collective. *Vukani Makhosikazi: South African Women Speak*. Edited by Ingrid Overy. London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1985.

Moving stories of black South African women's lives. They speak for themselves: about their work, their husbands and children, their homes and losing their homes in forced removals, their organizations, their leaders, their suffering. The editor provides a context for their stories and photographs.

News and Verbs

- Ten high-ranking American religious leaders with a range of views on abortion have issued a statement calling for an end to sloganeering and recognition that **abortion is a complex moral issue** that cannot be reduced to "simple rights and wrongs, pros and cons." They noted that they are united now in views of abortion as such but in a "deep and abiding reverence for both the mystery of human life and the freedom of human conscience grounded in insights brought by a community of faith." They called for a discussion on abortion that begins with "an understanding that we are dealing with a tangled web of rights and wrongs, good and evil, and greater and lesser tragedies."
- The 10th **Women in Ministry Conference** was held March 30--April 1 in Fresno, Calif. with 125 participants from parts of the U.S. and Canada exploring the theme, "Women Telling the Story." Katie Funk Wiebe was keynote speaker to the group of Mennonite Conference, General Conference, Mennonite Brethren, and Church of the Brethren men and women. Women in Ministry conferences, first held in 1976, are envisioned as a support network for women called to, or contemplating, pastoral leadership ministry. The conferences, diverse in nature, are planned by the initiative and invitation of a local group, and have created opportunities for women to express leadership and creativity.
- Goshen College, a Christian liberal arts college in the Mennonite, Anabaptist tradition, **invites applications for a teaching position** with view to tenure. Applicant will direct A.D.A. approved Plan VI/V Program and teach all nutrition and food management courses. Qualifications: R.D./Master's degree required - R.D./Ph.D preferred; supportive of the values of the Mennonite Church; capable of excellent undergraduate teaching; interest in world food concerns. Minorities especially invited. Send letter of interest, resume, transcripts and three references to John Eby, Academic Dean, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526.



Illustrations in this issue were drawn by Teresa Pankratz of Chicago. Please do not reproduce without permission.

- Opponents of abortion should be concerned with the **rights of women as well as the unborn**, according to speakers at a Conference on the Sanctity of Human Life held recently in Irving, Tex. by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. Richard Land, executive director of the Nashville-based commission, declared that "we must challenge the unbiblical sexual double standard which has too often allowed men to behave irresponsibly and exploitively toward women in our culture. Many women who have abortions have been abused, victimized, and abandoned by selfish men who view a pregnant woman as a broken sexual toy which an abortion will fix."
- **Marian Sauder** has been appointed administrator of Camp Deepark effective March 1, 1990. The camp is owned and operated by the New York City Council of Mennonite Churches. A 1985 graduate of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Sauder worked previously as a social worker. She attends North Bronx Mennonite Church.

WOMEN'S CONCERNS REPORT is published bimonthly by the MCC Committee on Women's Concerns. The committee, formed in 1973, believes that Jesus Christ teaches equality of all persons. By sharing information and ideas, the committee strives to promote new relationships and corresponding supporting structures in which men and women can grow toward wholeness and mutuality. Articles and views presented in *REPORT* do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Committee on Women's Concerns.

WOMEN'S CONCERNS REPORT edited by Christine Wenger Nofsinger. Layout by Shirley Stauffer Redekop. Correspondence and address changes should be sent to Chris Nofsinger, Editor, MCC, PO Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500.

U.S. residents may send subscriptions to the above address. Canadian residents may send subscriptions to MCC Canada, 50 Kent Avenue, Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1. A donation of \$10.00 per year per subscription is suggested.

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

- **Violence against women is pervasive**, say two Mennonite men. Clare Schumm, Elkhart, Ind., and Fred Loganbill, Newton, Kan., representing the Mennonite Church and the General Conference, were among 29 men to attend an ecumenical conference on violence against women at Stoney Point, N.Y. in February. "The purpose of the meeting was for men to stand in solidarity with women on this issue," said Loganbill. "As men, we need to recognize in what ways we are part of the problem and in what ways we are part of the solution."

"I became aware of how unsafe the world is for women," said Schumm. "It is a pervasive problem within the family, the church and society as a whole." In general, the two men have found that Mennonite women have affirmed their attendance at the conference, while Mennonite men have tended to be more skeptical. "It is natural for men to feel threatened because the problem is too close to home," said Schumm. "Men just don't talk about these kind of things among themselves. It has not been male agenda," said Loganbill. "Most men don't understand the full spectrum of discrimination that women experience."

Both men believe that there is silence and even denial about this problem within the Mennonite church. "Many male church leaders don't realize the privileges they have," said Schumm. "They don't see how women are kept powerless." Schumm and Loganbill hope to plan a similar event for Mennonite men in order to raise the awareness level.



**Mennonite
Central
Committee**

21 South 12th Street
PO Box 500
Akron, PA
17501-0500

2nd Class

POSTAGE PAID

at Akron, PA